

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) ~~Electric equipment~~ An electric apparatus comprising:
 - a function limiting ~~section~~module for setting a function limit to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus ~~becomes~~become unavailable;
 - an interface for connecting ~~an~~ a first external device to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus;
 - a ~~section~~module for obtaining first device identification information from ~~an~~ the first external device connected via the interface to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the first device external device;
 - a ~~section~~module for associating the function limit with the device identification information of a prescribed external device to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;
 - a memory for storing the cryptographic key;
 - a determining ~~section~~module for determining whether ~~or not the~~ a second device identification information obtained from ~~an~~ a second external device connected via the interface to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus matches ~~the device identification information of the~~ cryptographic key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling ~~section~~module for canceling the function limit set by the function limiting ~~section~~module ~~when~~if the determining ~~section~~module determines that the obtained second device identification information matches the cryptographic key.

2. (currently amended) ~~Electric equipment~~ An electric apparatus comprising:

a function limiting ~~section~~module for setting one or more function limits to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus so that at least part of the one or more functions of the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus ~~becomes~~become unavailable;

an interface for connecting ~~an a~~ first external device to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus;

a ~~section~~module for obtaining first device identification information from ~~an the~~ external device connected via the interface to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the first external device;

a ~~section~~module for associating each function limit with the first device identification information of ~~a prescribed~~ the first external device to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a memory for storing the cryptographic key;

a determining ~~section~~module for determining whether ~~or not the a~~ a second device identification information obtained from ~~an a~~ a second external device connected via the interface

to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus matches the ~~device identification information~~
~~included in~~ the cryptographic key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling ~~section~~module for canceling each of the one or more function limit
limits set by the function limiting ~~section~~module ~~when~~if the determining ~~section~~module
determines that the obtained second device information matches the first device identification
information associated with the function limit.

3. (currently amended) ~~Electric equipment~~ An electric apparatus comprising:

a function limiting ~~section~~module for setting a function limit to the ~~electric~~
~~equipment~~electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~electric
apparatus ~~becomes~~become unavailable;

a plurality of interfaces for connecting external devices to the ~~electric~~
~~equipment~~electric apparatus;

a ~~section~~module for obtaining device identification information from an external
device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus
to identify the external device;

a ~~section~~module for associating the function limit with at least one of the specific
device identification information ~~or~~and a combination of ~~plural~~ pieces of ~~specific~~the device
identification and other device identification information to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a memory for storing the cryptographic key;

a determining ~~section~~module for determining whether ~~or not the device~~
identification information obtained from each of one or more external devices~~device~~ connected
via one of the interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus matches the ~~device~~
~~identification information of the cryptographic key stored in the memory; and~~

a limit canceling ~~section~~module for canceling the function limit set by the function
limiting ~~section~~module ~~when~~if the determining ~~section~~module determines that the obtained
information from each of the one or more external devices matches the cryptographic key stored
in memory.

4. (currently amended) ~~Electric equipment~~ An electric apparatus comprising:

a function limiting ~~section~~module for setting a function limit to the ~~electric~~
~~equipment~~ electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~ electric
apparatus ~~becomes~~ become unavailable;

a plurality of interfaces for connecting external devices to the ~~electric~~
~~equipment~~electric apparatus;

a ~~section~~module for obtaining device identification information from an external
device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus
to identify the external device;

a ~~section~~module for generating connection route information indicating which interface of the plurality of interfaces is used to connect the external device that has provided the device identification information;

a ~~section~~module for associating the function limit with a combination of ~~prescribed~~ the device identification information and ~~relevant~~ connection route information to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a memory for storing at least one cryptographic key;

a determining ~~section~~module for determining whether ~~or not~~ a second combination of ~~the~~ device identification information obtained from each external device of one or more external devices connected via one of the interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus and ~~the~~ connection route information for ~~the~~ each external device of the one or more external devices matches ~~the combination of the device identification information and the connection route information of the~~ cryptographic key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling ~~section~~module for canceling the function limit set by the function limiting ~~section~~module ~~when~~if the determining ~~section~~module determines that the second combination of the obtained device information and connection route information matches the cryptographic key stored in memory.

5. (currently amended) ~~Electric equipment~~ An electric apparatus comprising:

a function limiting ~~section~~module for setting one or more function limits to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus ~~becomes-become~~ unavailable;

a plurality of interfaces for connecting external devices to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus;

a ~~section~~module for obtaining device identification information from an external device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the external device;

a ~~section~~module for associating each function limit of the one or more function limits with at least one of the ~~specific~~ device identification information ~~or~~and a combination of ~~plural~~ pieces of ~~specific~~the device identification information to thereby obtain a cryptographic key;

a memory for storing at least one cryptographic key;

a determining ~~section~~module for determining whether ~~or not~~ the device identification information obtained from each external device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus matches ~~the device identification information of any one of the~~ cryptographic ~~keys~~key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling ~~section~~module for canceling each function limit set by the function limiting ~~section~~module ~~when~~if the determining ~~section~~module determines that the obtained

information matches the ~~device identification information of the~~ cryptographic key related to the function limit.

6. (currently amended) ~~Electric equipment~~ An electric apparatus comprising:

a function limiting ~~section~~module for setting one or more function limits to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus ~~becomes~~become unavailable;

a plurality of interfaces for connecting external devices to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus;

a ~~section~~module for obtaining device identification information from an external device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the external device;

a ~~section~~module for generating connection route information indicating which interface of the plurality of interfaces is used to connect the external device that has provided the device identification information;

a ~~section~~module for associating each function limit of the one or more function limits with a combination of ~~prescribed the~~ device identification information and ~~relevant the~~ connection route information to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a memory for storing ~~at least one the~~ cryptographic key;

a determining ~~section~~module for determining whether ~~or not~~ a second combination of the device identification information obtained from each external device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus and the connection route information for the ~~each~~ external device matches ~~any one of the cryptographic keys~~ key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling ~~section~~module for canceling each function limit set by the function limiting ~~section~~module ~~whenif~~ the determining ~~section~~module determines that the combination of the obtained information and connection route information matches the cryptographic key related to the function limit.

7. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 1, further comprising a ~~section~~module for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information ~~whenif~~ the external device is capable of storing information.

8. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 2, further comprising a ~~section~~module for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information ~~whenif~~ the external device is capable of storing information.

9. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 3, further comprising a ~~section~~module for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information ~~when~~if the external device is capable of storing information.

10. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 4, further comprising a ~~section~~module for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information ~~when~~if the external device is capable of storing information.

11. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 5, further comprising a ~~section~~module for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information ~~when~~if the external device is capable of storing information.

12. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 6, further comprising a ~~section~~module for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information ~~when~~if the external device is capable of storing information.

13. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 1, further comprising a ~~section~~module for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining ~~section~~module made a ~~the~~ determination.

14. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 2, further comprising a ~~section~~module for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining ~~section~~module made a ~~the~~ determination.

15. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 3, further comprising a ~~section~~module for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining ~~section~~module made a ~~the~~ determination.

16. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 4, further comprising a ~~section~~module for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining ~~section~~module made a ~~the~~ determination.

17. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 5, further comprising a ~~section~~module for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining ~~section~~module made a ~~the~~ determination.

18. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 6, further comprising a ~~section~~module for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining ~~section~~module made a ~~the~~ determination.

19. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

a ~~section~~module for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information ~~when~~if the external device is capable of storing information; and

a ~~section~~module for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining ~~section~~module made a ~~the~~ determination.

20. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 2, further comprising:

a ~~section~~module for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information ~~when~~if the external device is capable of storing information; and

a ~~section~~module for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining ~~section~~module made a ~~the~~ determination.

21. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 3, further comprising:

a ~~section~~module for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information ~~when~~if the external device is capable of storing information; and

a ~~section~~module for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining ~~section~~module made a ~~the~~ determination.

22. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 4, further comprising:

a ~~section~~module for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information ~~when~~if the external device is capable of storing information; and

a ~~section~~module for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining ~~section~~module made a ~~the~~ determination.

23. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 5, further comprising:

a ~~section~~module for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information ~~when~~if the external device is capable of storing information; and

a ~~section~~module for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining ~~section~~module made ~~thea~~ determination.

24. (currently amended) The ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus claimed in claim 6, further comprising:

a ~~section~~module for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information ~~when~~if the external device is capable of storing information; and

a ~~section~~module for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining ~~section~~module made ~~thea~~ determination.

25. (currently amended) A method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus including an interface to connect an external device thereto, comprising:

a function limiting step for setting a function limit to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus ~~becomes~~ become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from an external device connected via the interface to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus to identify the external device;

a step for associating the function limit with the device identification information obtained at the first device identification information obtaining step to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining a second device identification information from ~~an~~ a second external device connected via the interface to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus to identify the second external device;

a determining step for determining whether ~~or not~~ the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches ~~the device identification information of the~~ cryptographic key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling the function limit set at the function limiting step ~~when~~ if it is determined at the determining step that the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches the cryptographic key.

26. (currently amended) A method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus including an interface to connect an external device thereto, comprising:

a function limiting step for setting one or more function limits to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus ~~becomes~~ become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from an external device connected via the interface to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus to identify the device;

a step for associating each function limit of the one or more function limits with the device identification information of a ~~prescribed~~ the external device to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining a second device identification information from ~~an~~ a second external device connected via the interface to the electric equipment to identify the second external device;

a determining step for determining whether ~~or not~~ the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches ~~the device identification information included in the~~ cryptographic key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling each function limit of the one or more function limits set at the function limiting step ~~when~~if it is determined at the determining step that the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches ~~the device identification information of~~ the cryptographic key related to the function limit.

27. (currently amended) A method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus including a plurality of interfaces to connect external devices thereto, comprising:

a function limiting step for setting a function limit to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus ~~becomes~~ become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from ~~each~~ an external device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the electric equipment to identify the external device;

a step for associating the function limit with at least one of the ~~specific~~ device identification information ~~or~~ and a combination of ~~plural~~ pieces of ~~specific~~ the device identification information to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining second device identification information from each of one or more external devices ~~device~~ connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus to identify each of the one or more external devices ~~device~~;

a determining step for determining whether ~~or not~~ at least one of the second device identification information ~~or and~~ a combination of ~~plural pieces of~~ the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches ~~the device identification information of~~ the cryptographic key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling the function limit set at the function limiting step ~~when~~ if it is determined at the determining step that the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches the cryptographic key.

28. (currently amended) A method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus including a plurality of interfaces to connect external devices thereto, comprising:

a function limiting step for setting a function limit to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus ~~becomes~~ become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from ~~each-an~~ external device connected via one of the interfaces to the electric equipment to identify the external device;

a first connection route information generating step for generating first connection route information indicating which interface is used to connect the external device to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step;

a step for associating the function limit with a combination of ~~prescribed-the~~ device identification information and ~~relevant-the~~ connection route information to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining second device identification information from ~~each-a~~ second external device connected via one of the interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus to identify the second external device;

a second connection route information generating step for generating second connection route information indicating which interface is used to connect the second external device to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus at the second device identification information obtaining step;

a determining step for determining whether ~~or not~~ a second combination of the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information

obtaining step and the second connection route information matches the cryptographic key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling the function limit set at the function limiting step ~~when~~if it is determined at the determining step that the second combination of the information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step and the second connection route information matches the cryptographic key.

29. (currently amended) A method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus including a plurality of interfaces to connect external devices thereto, comprising:

a function limiting step for setting one or more function limits to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus ~~becomes~~ become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from ~~each~~ an external device connected via one of the interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus to identify the external device;

a step for associating each function limit of the one or more function limits with the ~~specific~~ device identification information or a combination of ~~plural~~ pieces of ~~specific~~ the device identification information to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining a second device identification information from ~~each~~ a second external device connected via one of the interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus to identify the second external device;

a determining step for determining whether ~~or not~~ at least one of the second device identification information ~~or and~~ a combination of plural pieces of the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches ~~the device identification information of any one of the cryptographic keys~~ key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling each function limit of the one or more function limits set at the function limiting step ~~when~~ if it is determined at the determining step that the second information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches ~~the device identification information of the cryptographic key~~ related to the function limit.

30. (currently amended) A method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus including a plurality of interfaces to connect external devices thereto, comprising:

a function limiting step for setting one or more function limits to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus ~~becomes~~ become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from ~~each~~an external device connected via one of the interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the external device;

a first connection route information generating step for generating first connection route information indicating which interface is used to connect the external device to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step;

a step for associating ~~the~~a function limit of the one or more function limits with a combination of ~~prescribed~~the device identification information and the first connection route information to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining second device identification information from ~~each~~a second external device connected via one of the interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the second external device;

a second connection route information generating step for generating second connection route information indicating which interface of the plurality of interfaces is used to connect the second external device to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the second device identification information obtaining step;

a determining step for determining whether ~~or not~~ at least one of a second combination of the second device identification information obtained at the second device

identification information obtaining step and the second connection route information matches ~~any one of the cryptographic keys~~ key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling each function limit of the one or more function limits set at the function limiting step ~~when~~ if it is determined at the determining step that the second combination of the information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step and the second connection route information matches the cryptographic key related to the function limit.

31. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus claimed in claim 25, further comprising a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~ if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information.

32. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus claimed in claim 26, further comprising a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining

step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information.

33. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~an electric apparatus claimed in claim 27, further comprising a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electronic apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information.

34. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~an electric apparatus claimed in claim 28, further comprising a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information.

35. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~an electric apparatus claimed in claim 29, further comprising a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to

the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information.

36. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~an electric apparatus claimed in claim 30, further comprising a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information.

37. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~an electric apparatus claimed in claim 25, further comprising a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

38. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~an electric apparatus claimed in claim 26, further comprising a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

39. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus claimed in claim 27, further comprising a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

40. (currently amended) he method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus claimed in claim 28, further comprising a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

41. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus claimed in claim 29, further comprising a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

42. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus claimed in claim 30, further comprising a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

43. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus claimed in claim 25, further comprising:

a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information after the first device

identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information; and

a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

44. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~an electric apparatus claimed in claim 26, further comprising:

a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information; and

a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

45. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~an electric apparatus claimed in claim 27, further comprising:

a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information after the first device

identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information; and

a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

46. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~an electric apparatus claimed in claim 28, further comprising:

a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information; and

a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

47. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~an electric apparatus claimed in claim 29, further comprising:

a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information after the first device

identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information; and

a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

48. (currently amended) The method for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~an electric apparatus claimed in claim 30, further comprising:

a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as corresponding to the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information; and

a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

49. (currently amended) A program recorded on a computer readable medium for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~an electric apparatus, which is built into the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus including an interface to connect an external device thereto, and ~~makes a computer having the program enabling a computer to effective control over~~

the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus, wherein the program includes the steps of: ~~execute steps~~
as follows:

a function limiting step for setting a function limit to the ~~electric equipment~~electric
apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus
~~becomes~~become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device
identification information from an external device connected via the interface to the ~~electric~~
~~equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the external device;

a step for associating the function limit with the device identification information
obtained at the first device identification information obtaining step to ~~thereby~~ obtain a
cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining second
device identification information from ~~an~~ a second external device connected via the interface to
the electric equipment to identify the second external device;

a determining step for determining whether ~~or not~~ the second device identification
information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches ~~the~~
~~device identification information of~~ the cryptographic key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling the function limit set at the function limiting step
~~when~~if it is determined at the determining step that the second device identification information

obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches the cryptographic key.

50. (currently amended) A program recorded on a computer readable medium for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus, which is built into the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus including an interface to connect an external device thereto, and ~~makes a computer having effective~~ the program enabling a computer to control over the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus, wherein the program includes the steps of: ~~execute steps~~ as follows:

a function limiting step for setting one or more function limits to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus ~~becomes~~ become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from an external device connected via the interface to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus to identify the device;

a step for associating each function limit of the one or more function limits with the device identification information of a ~~prescribed the~~ external device to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining a second device identification information from ~~an~~ a second external device connected via the interface to the electric equipment to identify the second external device;

a determining step for determining whether ~~or not~~ the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches ~~the device identification information included in any one of the cryptographic key keys~~ stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling each function limit of the one or more function limits set at the function limiting step ~~when~~ if it is determined at the determining step that the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches ~~the device identification information of the cryptographic key related to~~ the function limit.

51. (currently amended) A program recorded on a computer readable medium for preventing the unauthorized use of an electric apparatus~~electric equipment~~, which is built into the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus including a plurality of interfaces to connect external devices thereto, and ~~makes a computer having effective~~ the program enabling a computer to control over the electric equipment electric apparatus, wherein the program includes the steps of:
~~execute steps as follows:~~

a function limiting step for setting a function limit to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus ~~becomes~~become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from ~~each~~an external device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the external device;

a step for associating the function limit with at least one of the ~~specific~~ device identification information ~~or~~and a combination of ~~plural~~ pieces of ~~specific~~the device identification information to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining second device identification information from ~~each~~a second external device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the second external device;

a determining step for determining whether ~~or not~~ at least one of the second device identification information ~~or~~and the combination of ~~plural~~ pieces of the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches ~~the device identification information of~~ the cryptographic key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling the function limit of the one or more function limits set at the function limiting step ~~when~~if it is determined at the determining step that the

second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches the cryptographic key.

52. (currently amended) A program recorded on a computer readable medium for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus, which is built into the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus including a plurality of interfaces to connect external devices thereto, and ~~makes a computer having effective~~ the program enabling a computer to control over the electric equipment electric apparatus, wherein the program includes the steps of: ~~execute steps as follows:~~

a function limiting step for setting a function limit to the electric equipment so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus ~~becomes~~ become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from ~~each~~ an external device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus to identify the external device;

a first connection route information generating step for generating first connection route information indicating which interface of the plurality of interfaces is used to connect the external device to the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step;

a step for associating the function limit with a combination of ~~prescribed~~the device identification information and ~~relevant~~the connection route information to ~~thereby~~ obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining a second device identification information from ~~each~~a second external device connected via one of the plurality of interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the second external device;

a second connection route information generating step for generating second connection route information indicating which interface of he plurality of interfaces is used to connect the second external device to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the second device identification information obtaining step;

a determining step for determining whether ~~or not~~ a second combination of the second device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step and the second connection route information matches the cryptographic key stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling the function limit of the one or more function limits set at the function limiting step ~~when~~if it is determined at the determining step that the second combination of the information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step and the second connection route information matches the cryptographic key.

53. (currently amended) A program recorded on a computer readable ~~for~~ medium for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment, which is built into the ~~electric~~ ~~equipment~~electric apparatus including a plurality of interfaces to connect external devices thereto, and ~~makes a computer having effective~~ the program enabling a computer to control over the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus, wherein the program includes the steps of: ~~execute steps~~ as follows:

a function limiting step for setting one or more function limits to the electric equipment so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus ~~becomes~~become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from each external device connected via one of the interfaces to the electric equipment to identify the device;

a step for associating each function limit with the specific device identification information or a combination of plural pieces of specific device identification information to thereby obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing the cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from each external device connected via one of the interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the device;

a determining step for determining whether ~~or not~~ the device identification information or a combination of plural pieces of device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches the device identification information of any one of the cryptographic keys stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling each function limit set at the function limiting step ~~when~~if it is determined at the determining step that the information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step matches the device identification information of the cryptographic key related to the function limit.

54. (currently amended) A program recorded on a computer readable medium for preventing the unauthorized use of ~~electric equipment~~ an electric apparatus, which is built into the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus including a plurality of interfaces to connect external devices thereto, and ~~makes a computer having effective~~ the program enabling a computer to control ~~over the electric equipment~~ electric apparatus, wherein the program includes the steps of: ~~execute steps as follows:~~

a function limiting step for setting one or more function limits to the electric equipment so that at least part of functions of the ~~electric equipment~~ electric apparatus ~~becomes~~ become unavailable;

a first device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from each external device connected via one of the interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the device;

a first connection route information generating step for generating first connection route information indicating which interface is used to connect the external device to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step;

a step for associating the function limit with a combination of prescribed device identification information and the first connection route information to thereby obtain a cryptographic key;

a step for storing at least one cryptographic key in a memory;

a second device identification information obtaining step for obtaining device identification information from each external device connected via one of the interfaces to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus to identify the device;

a second connection route information generating step for generating second connection route information indicating which interface is used to connect the external device to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the second device identification information obtaining step;

a determining step for determining whether ~~or not~~ a combination of the device identification information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step

and the second connection route information matches any one of the cryptographic keys stored in the memory; and

a limit canceling step for canceling each function limit set at the function limiting step ~~when~~if it is determined at the determining step that the combination of the information obtained at the second device identification information obtaining step and the second connection route information matches the cryptographic key related to the function limit.

55. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 49, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute a step for,~~ wherein the program comprises the further step of having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information.

56. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 50, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute a step for,~~ wherein the program comprises the further step of having the external device store information that uniquely identifies

the external device as the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information.

57. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment~~ claimed in claim 51, ~~making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute a step for~~wherein the program comprises the further step of having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information.

58. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment~~ claimed in claim 52, ~~making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute a step for~~wherein the program comprises the further step of having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus

apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information.

59. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 53, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute a step for~~wherein the program comprises the further step of having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information.

60. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 54, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute a step for~~wherein the program comprises the further step of having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information.

61. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium for ~~preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 49, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute a step for~~wherein the program comprises the further step of resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

62. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium for ~~preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 50, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute a step for~~wherein the program comprises the further step of resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

63. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium for ~~preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 51, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute a step for~~wherein the program comprises the further step of resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

64. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 52, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute a step for~~wherein the program comprises the further step of resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

65. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 53, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute a step for~~wherein the program includes the further step of resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

66. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 54, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute a step for~~wherein the program comprises the further step of resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

67. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 49, making the computer~~

~~having effective control over the electric equipment execute further steps as follows~~wherein the
program comprises the further steps of:

a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the
external device as the device identification information after the first device identification
information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric
apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing
information; and

a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed
after the determining step.

68. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for~~
~~preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment~~ claimed in claim 50, ~~making the computer~~
~~having effective control over the electric equipment execute further steps as follows~~wherein the
program comprises the further steps of:

a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the
external device as the device identification information after the first device identification
information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric
apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing
information; and

a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

69. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 51, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute further steps as follows~~wherein the program comprises further steps of:

a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information; and

a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

70. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 52, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute further steps as follows~~wherein the program comprises the further steps of:

a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information; and

a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

71. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 53, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute further steps as follows~~wherein the program comprises the further steps of:

a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information; and

a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.

72. (currently amended) The program recorded on a computer readable medium ~~for preventing the unauthorized use of electric equipment claimed in claim 54, making the computer having effective control over the electric equipment execute further steps as follows~~wherein the program comprises the further steps of:

a step for having the external device store information that uniquely identifies the external device as the device identification information after the first device identification information obtaining step ~~when~~if the external device connected to the ~~electric equipment~~electric apparatus at the first device identification information obtaining step is capable of storing information; and

a step for resetting the function limit ~~when~~if a prescribed period of time has passed after the determining step.